

WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Representatives Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ), James P. McGovern (D-MA), Sam Farr (D-CA) and Barbara Lee (D-CA) today issued the following statement in anticipation of President Uribe's planned meeting with President Bush on Wednesday, June 14, 2006.

"We join in welcoming Colombian President Álvaro Uribe on his visit to Washington and congratulate him upon his reelection. At this moment, we would like to pose two questions to President Uribe and one to President Bush.

"To President Uribe:

"1. In your second term, Mr. President, do you plan to invest more resources in bringing basic services --roads, water, electricity, alternative development, farm credit and extension services, schools, courts, health clinics -- to the parts of the countryside torn by conflict? Investment in neglected areas of the country is as vital as security in establishing a peaceful and prosperous nation. What are your plans to return land to many of Colombia's some 3 million people displaced by violence and to provide the tools to rebuild their lives?

"2. What are your plans to strengthen the rule of law in Colombia, to fully dismantle paramilitary networks now that many have demobilized, to ensure that your armed forces respect human rights, and to investigate and prosecute those who stray from these guidelines? What steps will you take to protect the rights of human rights defenders, union leaders, community activists, journalists, students and opposition politicians who face threats and attacks, and yet whose work is vital for a flourishing democratic society?

"To President Bush:

"3. Is it not time for us to invest more, and more effectively, in drug treatment and prevention programs here at home? We have spent \$4.7 billion in Colombia, much of it on an expensive aerial spraying program that has failed to reduce by one acre the quantity of drugs produced in Colombia. Would it not be more helpful to our own country and to drug-producing nations to invest more resources in reducing the demand for illegal drugs?"